

**2009 Meeting  
Geneva, 7-11 December 2009**

**Meeting of Experts  
Geneva, 24-28 August 2009**

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of, with a view to enhancing international  
cooperation, assistance and exchange in biological  
sciences and technology for peaceful purposes, promoting  
capacity building in the fields of disease surveillance,  
detection, diagnosis, and containment of infectious diseases**

## **DISEASE SURVEILLANCE, DETECTION, DIAGNOSIS AND CONTAINMENT IN IRAQ**

Submitted by Iraq

1. The Directorate of Public Health/Iraqi Ministry of Health is responsible for controlling disease, putting the plans and programs to control them through the following:

- (i) Communicable Diseases Center (CDC).
- (ii) Center Public Health Laboratories (CPHL).

Within the context of the International Health Regulations (2005), the situation of the laboratories in Iraq is as follows:

2. Laboratory Data: the data managements and data base line of laboratory results are shared in collaboration with CDC in Poliomyelitis, Measles, Avian Flu, Rota, HIV, Cholera, and other communicable diseases that have an epidemic trend.

Participation in Surveillance and Response Activities: there is a continuous monitoring policy of infectious cases through an investigation form and algorithms at national laboratories in order to determine antimicrobial resistance. In spite of that there are trained staff who are certified by IATA regulations but currently the shipment of biological material is carried out through WHO support.

3. Biosafety: Ministry of Health laboratories depend on international reports to carry out biosafety instructions and procedures (there is no national biosafety guide). The assessment of biorisk in Iraq is carried out through:

- (i) taking swabs from surgical theaters in hospitals;
- (ii) water analysis from health centers;
- (iii) biosafety committees in hospitals and laboratories.

Iraqi laboratories have the ability to carry out biological biosafety (levels 1 and 2) only with the presence of workshops for training laboratory staff on biological safety and regulations to deal with how to get rid of infectious substances for medical and non-medical waste in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment and Baghdad Municipality. However there is limited regulation to protect laboratory staff against infection in Avian Flu.

4. Quality Assurance: there are some applications on the availability of national standards and national system accreditation according to the ISO system or other international systems in Iraq, such as the presence of some guidelines and national policies that determine laboratory activities, e.g. Measles, Poliomyelitis, Avian Flu, Food and Water, maternal and child care programs, and some of these laboratories participate in external Quality Control which is supervised by WHO, e.g., Polio and Measles. CPHL is considered as an independent and unique national reference laboratory which is responsible for the evaluation of all kits and laboratory equipment that are imported into Iraq.

5. Laboratory Staff Training Capacity: laboratory staff training is available according to local abilities available in national laboratories to detect most biological and chemical dangers and in case of need the samples are sent to regional international reference laboratories.

6. Network with international and external laboratories: there is a collaboration link with WHO through the National Health Department/Ministry of Health in order to organize work between national laboratories and reference regional laboratories according to MOUs.

7. Sample collection and transportation: sample collection, organization and shipment inside the country is carried out according to regulations with available experience in medical organizations on dealing with communicable diseases samples as well as monitoring necessary equipment to transport these samples and monitoring during shipment with taking care of the circumstances surrounding the sample according to global recommendations. Sample transportation outside the country is carried out recently by depending on WHO supporting and depending couriers.

8. At present, Iraq kindly requests the following:

- (i) The application of Article X of the Biological Weapons Convention;
  - (ii) Building - capacity of the officials;
  - (iii) Providing Iraq with new equipment for earlier diagnosis of the epidemic diseases;
  - (iv) Establishing laboratories at biosafety level 3.
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